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ABSTRACT

The conference paper explores a unified institutional effectiveness planning model which allows for outcomes assessment linked with strategic planning and budgeting through all levels (departments, divisions, and offices) of the institution. The use of an organized reporting system as part of a systematic planning process provides a useful and accessible record of efforts and documentation of results over extended periods, which are essential components of regional accreditation standards. The planning process at San Jacinto College (Texas) is organized through the use of Institutional Effectiveness Unit Plans. The Unit Plan document is constructed to track the following items: the purpose of the unit within the institution's organizational structure; unit objectives and their relation to the college goals; steps to be taken related to the unit objectives; the criteria by which to measure progress; documentation of progress; analyses of the results and the process for which to provide the basis; and a projection of changes needed for the coming year and their impact on the budget. To help integrate planning into the routine functioning of the college, its operational planning cycle is matched with the academic and fiscal calendar. Additionally, all budget requests must be related to and supported by an institutional effectiveness unit plan. (JA)

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Closing The Loop, Without The Loop Closing On You!

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James A. Braswell, Ph.D.

Dr. James A. Braswell is currently serving as Professor of Music and Coordinator of Institutional Planning and Development at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas. Dr. Braswell came to San Jacinto as chair of the Division of Fine Arts and Communications in the fall of 1995, moving to his new role in the fall of 1998. Dr. Braswell oversees the implementation and continuing refinement of the college's planning and development efforts, including institutional effectiveness, program development, and grant acquisitions.

Dr. Braswell brings to San Jacinto extensive administrative and teaching experience in higher education, having previously served at Marymount College of Kansas, The University of Georgia, and Valdosta State University (GA) prior to joining San Jacinto College. Dr. Braswell was instrumental in the development of statewide curriculum guides in fine arts, language arts, and physical education for the State of Georgia and was founding editor of *The Southeastern Journal of Music Education*, a national research journal. Dr. Braswell received his undergraduate degrees from East Texas State University (now Texas A & M University-Commerce); the Master of Music Education degree from Loyola University in New Orleans, and the Ph.D. from The University of Oklahoma.

Mary L. May, Ed.D.

Dr. Mary L. May currently serves as Academic Dean at San Jacinto College Central. In that capacity, she supervises the preparation and evaluation of budgets and planning documents for 15 departments and the all-campus open computer lab. Prior to assuming that position she was an instructor, a department chair, and a division chair for Accounting and Business Administration. As a member of the steering committee for the College's recent reaffirmation of accreditation, she gained a broad-based understanding of planning for a multi-campus district.

Dr. May earned an Ed.D. in Educational Administration from Baylor University in 1994. Prior degrees were from the University of Houston and Stephen F. Austin University. Work experiences in business and industry, as well as educational institutions of all levels, have provided a broad exposure to financial management and an awareness of the need to formulate budgets based on the institution's goals and objectives.

CLOSING THE LOOP, WITHOUT THE LOOP CLOSING ON YOU!

Introduction

Planning and documentation of the on-going planning process are essential in establishing and demonstrating institutional effectiveness. While campus-wide performance indicators and measures have been the focus of much of this effort, there is a growing need for similar documentation at the departmental and unit levels throughout an institution.

An organized reporting system, as part of a systematic planning process, can also provide a useful and accessible record of efforts and documentation of results over extended periods, which are essential to accurately evaluating the effectiveness of any effort. This presentation will explore an established, unified, and integrated institutional effectiveness planning model which allows for outcomes assessment linked with strategic planning and budgeting through all levels (departments, divisions, and offices) of the institution.

SJCC Integrated Planning System

During the past three years San Jacinto College Central (SJCC) has worked to establish a three-tiered planning system composed of strategic, operational, and project planning components. This process is guided and monitored utilizing the organizational structures already in place in order to imbed a continuous planning component within the functional operation of the college. Thus planning coordination mirrors the functional structure of the institution and is facilitated at all levels by the Coordinator of Planning and Development.

Institutional effectiveness planning began with the development of a vision based upon a review and analysis of the history, capabilities, and condition of the institution; needs of the service area; and environmental trends likely to impact the institution's future. A mission statement sets forth the role and major tasks of the institution by establishing major priorities, boundaries, and focus. The college established four goals to help focus its efforts in meeting this mission. These goals are reviewed every five years (coinciding with the major state and national accreditation cycles) and serve as a resource for the various units in organizing their planning and budgeting efforts.

The organizational structure of San Jacinto College Central is divided into four large subdivisions, which contain related departments, offices, and programs. Each of the subdivisions may contain several different types of budgetary units, including divisions, instructional departments, program and service areas, and/or offices. Since carrying out any organizational plan is dependent upon and impacts the institution's budget, institutional effectiveness planning is organized through and reported by budget units. Thus, we use Institutional Effectiveness Planning Unit (IEUP) as a common term to refer to all organizational elements which have specific budgets and participate in the annual planning cycle.

Operational Planning

The focus of our presentation will be an exploration of a unified planning tool designed to help guide the various units in developing and monitoring their efforts to improve effectiveness. In addition, the planning instrument provides a dynamic link between the strategic and operational planning within the integrated system.

Our planning process is organized through the use of Institutional Effectiveness Unit Plans prepared by each budgeted unit within the college. A recommended form for each Unit Plan has been developed to help guide the various units in formulating and monitoring strategies to improve institutional effectiveness. The Institutional Effectiveness Unit Plan document is constructed to track the following items:

- the purpose of the unit within the institution's organizational structure;
- unit objectives (areas of emphasis) and their relation to the established college goals;
- the specific steps to be taken during the year related to the established unit objectives;
- the criteria, standards, or benchmarks by which to measure progress;
- documentation of achievement or progress;
- reflections and analyses of the results and the process to provide the basis for;
- a projection of changes, additions or alterations needed for the coming year and their impact on the budget.

Elements of the I. E. Unit Plan

The planning document contains the following elements designed to assist in the development, organization, monitoring, evaluation and recording of the unit's efforts in institutional effectiveness during the year:

- Purpose: A statement of the purpose of the department or unit within the college organization and the focus or perimeters of its efforts.
- Goal Statements: Drawn directly from the established college goals to be addressed by the unit. While many units within the college will address each of the College Goals, all units may not need to do so.
- Objectives: These identify specific areas of emphasis for the department or unit related to the established college goals. Unit objectives generally require more than one planning/budget cycle to be completed and function as the unit's goals.
- Strategies: These list specific action steps needed to address the objective and serve as a guide to focus the unit's efforts during the year. In order to help make clear the relationship of each specific strategy to a college goal, they are numbered using a three-digit code. The first digit refers to the college goal, the second to the specific unit objective, and the third is the number of the strategy. Thus, Strategy 1.1.1 would identify the unit's first strategy or action step to address the first departmental objective related to Goal I of the college.
- Evaluative Measures: Evaluative measures are predetermined criteria, standards, or benchmarks needed to determine completion or achievement of the Strategy and its related Objective or document progress toward such achievement or completion. This section does not prescribe the process of evaluation, but describes the expected data or

result that will provide evidence or documentation that we have completed or made progress towards completion of the strategy and its associated objective.

- Quantifiable Data: This section allows the reporting of specific facts, information, numbers, accomplishments, and actions taken during the academic year related to the specific Strategy. It serves as a summary of the unit's efforts in and results from carrying out the strategy and addressing the objective. Comments in this section should present a straightforward accounting of efforts, actions, summary numbers, or events. It is not a value judgment of the effort or the strategy, but a documentation of actions taken and results acquired. It may include actions which were not anticipated or specifically detailed in the Strategy, but which bear on the Strategy and Objective.
- Response and Projections: The final section of the Unit Plan serves a dual function. It provides the opportunity to add qualitative information about the process and/or results (or lack of results) and projections for the coming year, based upon an analysis of the actions, efforts, results and reflections on the process. This *closing of the planning loop* is essential to the development of a systematic institutional effectiveness process. These *responses* provide an opportunity to summarize the impact of the unit's efforts. This section might contain brief statements related to: (1) reflections on the process, (2) explanations about the process or circumstances that affected efforts, (3) insights gained during the year's work, and/or (4) unexpected results or non-quantifiable, qualitative information.

Example 1. I. E. Unit Plan

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE CENTRAL
Institutional Effectiveness Unit Plan FY 1998-99
Department of Art – (004)
Updated: August 1, 1999

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The Department of Art's purpose is to carry out the College's four goals by delivering (a) quality professional transfer courses in the visual arts; (b) relevant technical training programs in commercial art and computer-based graphic design; and (c) cultural enrichment and education opportunities to the general student body, faculty and staff, and communities within our service area.

District long-term goal 1:	To provide high-quality instruction in response to community needs.
District short-term goal 1:	Revise, enhance and develop the criteria to meet the needs of the community including changing technology in the workplace, increasing demands for broadly-educated citizens, and continuing enrollment of under-prepared students.
District short-term goal 2:	Enhance student learning through excellence in teaching, student support services and innovative instructional delivery.
Campus goal I:	To provide high-quality instruction in response to community needs.

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Objective 1.1: Continue to provide high quality, relevant instructional programs designed to allow transferability to senior colleges and universities and equip graduates with skills for entering the world of work.				
	STRATEGIES: (FY 98-99)	**EVALUATIVE MEASURES (Critical Success Factors)**	**QUANTIFIABLE DATA (Collected During FY 98-99)**	**RESPONSE TO FY 98-99 & PROJECTIONS FOR FY 99-009: (Include budget implications for FY 1999-2000)**
1.1.1	Maintain and improve contact with area high school programs to determine student interests and needs.	Attend at least one high school college night and present at least two in-school presentations.	Hosted Start Trek for two groups of students during Fall Semester and one during Spring.	Attend at least one high school college night and present at least two in-school presentations.
1.1.2	Establish independent advisory committee for technical commercial art certificate and degree programs.	At least one commercial art advisory meeting will be held. At least two additional professionals will be added to the Commercial Art Advisory Committee.	Conducted Advisory meeting on December 2, 1998. Three additional members have been added.	Plans are in progress to conduct a second advisory meeting for the 98-99 academic year. Additional industry representatives are being contacted to replace one member lost, and to address planned addition of "Computer Gaming Design" certificate. Plan for two meetings per academic year.

One of the barriers to setting specific Evaluative Measures is an often-expressed concern about the impact of negative outcomes or non-achievement at predetermined levels. As we have seen, a lack of a target provides limited ways to measure progress. Few individuals or departments can maintain their energy and focus if it is not possible to see progress. Please remember that successful planning is not dependent upon always achieving the objectives. Successful planning is achieved with the active engagement of a systematic process of considered action, informed by the analysis of efforts and results against pre-determined standards.

Decisions are only as good as the quality of information upon which they are based. Most important changes in higher education require continuing effort across more than a single budget cycle; thus there must be some way of tracking the progress in several areas at once. With the increasing diversity of instructional programs, careful and useful planning will become increasingly important as a management tool. The planning model here described provides a framework to assist in building such a unified process.

Planning Cycle

As part of the effort to integrate planning into the routine functioning of the college, we have moved to match our Operational Planning Cycle with the academic and fiscal calendar. Once begun, the projections from one year become the basis for the new Unit Objectives and Strategies for the following year. Data about the unit's activities and results are collected during the academic year and added to the Planning Document. Finally, the cycle is closed with a review of the work, analysis of the progress and the development of projections, with any budget

impacts, for the following year. The completed Institutional Effectiveness Unit Plan is forwarded to the campus planning office during the summer with the unit retaining a copy to be filed as part of its historical record, which will be used for the periodic state and regional reviews. The entire process is controlled via an *Annual Planning Calendar* provided to guide institutional effectiveness planning and related essential functions required of the various units in the College.

The operational planning effort is overseen by a twelve-person Budget and Planning Committee composed of six permanent administrative members and six rotating members from the faculty and staff. In order to review the more than 100 individual unit plans developed annually, a 15-member I. E. Review Team assists the Budget and Planning Committee. The I. E. Review Team is composed of representatives of the Budget & Planning Committee and additional faculty and staff from each of the instructional divisions and administrative and student support areas. This peer review serves to monitor the progress of the units, assist in improving the usefulness of the planning and documentation process, and provide background and support for the annual budget development process.

Budget Integration

All budget requests must be related to and supported by an institutional effectiveness unit plan. Each fall the Budget and Planning Committee holds budget hearings to review projected budget requests for the coming fiscal year and to identify campus-wide budget priorities and multi-year expenditure plans as part of the institution's strategic planning. The development of the budget for the next fiscal year is guided by the College's long-range strategic plan and based upon the unit plans and campus priority initiatives. The wedding of the annual unit- and campus-level operational planning with the College's strategic plan through the budget development and management process is essential to the integration of the system.

Summary

We engage in planning because it is in the best interest of individuals, instructional, support, and administrative units, and the institution. If followed in a consistent and effective manner, careful and organized planning can help all involved maximize effort and impact while saving money, time and energy. Effective planning can also help build understanding on the part of administrators and colleagues about the unit's programs and role, its scope, activities, and needs. The use of an organized reporting system, as part of a systematic planning process, provides a useful and accessible record of efforts and documentation of results over extended periods, which are essential components of regional accreditation standards.